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4-13-1856

Letter from Jonathan Stone Whitney, Aiken, South Carolina, to Sarah Whitney, 1856 April 13

Jonathan Stone Whitney

Wellesley College Archives

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Aiken, S.C. April 13. '56

My dear Sarah

There being no excuse of want of time it 'were a pity' if I did not occasionally write a letter - you have probably heard through Edw.^d that we arrived at this place on the 5th inst. and that Edw.^d left for N. Orleans on the 9th - I was desirous of stopping here longer than he could find it convenient to wait, and urged him to proceed on his journey - I trust he is now in New Orleans. We had a pleasant visit of about two weeks in Florida among very kind friends (not speaking of sand flies and Mosquitos) and left that Country with some regrets - as to Aiken, the place is a famous resort for Invalids from all parts of the Country - tho' mostly from the North, who are found here in all stages of Consumption - from first to last degree. It is a pleasant Village for this State, on a dry sand plain about six hundred feet higher than tide water (or the City of Charleston) - where no grass will grow - and but few trees beside the pine, which latter is principal tree of this region, and is considered by many of the Invalids here as the healing virtue of the Country - the source from whence the blessing of health flows - The weather has been very hot here especially for the last few days - Thermometer ranging from 80 to 85

as to my own health, I hardly know whether
to say I am better or not - as to my cough, I do
not cough so much as I did before leaving home,
yet I have some, and with expectation - The first
two days I was here I rode horseback which did
me no good - leaving me sore and badly affecting my
chest - I shall stop here ten days or two weeks yet
and have not much doubt but in that time I can
make a more favorable report - The horseback
riding is the principal institution of the place
and we have besides, Bowling, Billiards and in the eveg
card playing - music and dancing - it is the most
cheerful company I was ever in - and I sometimes
think, what a pity it is that all the world are
not invalids - If New Orleans is as hot as Aiken, Edw.
will not make a long stay there - we thought that
we might meet at Louisville, and go to the Cave,
but I have determined to stop here till about
the 25th and possibly later, and then go directly home
by steamer from Charleston -

South Carolina is a miserable state on the whole, tho'
in many respects it has redeeming virtues - as a
state it is very jealous of its honor - fame and credit.
The wealthy classes are said to be highly cultivated
and very hospitable - one peculiarity of the people
so far as I have seen them is, that every man
seems to think that he has the whole burden of
state honor to carry upon his individual shoulders

and he is constantly on his guard lest he say or
do any thing by which the honor of his state may
be compromised - The poor, like all "poor white
folks" at the South are more degraded than the
free blacks at the North - Every man who owns
a nigger is either a General, Colonel or Major -
though Doctors and judges abound - I have not
yet seen a Captain or private

Before going to Florida - we called upon Mr Locke
in Charleston who with her husband showed us
kind attention - I have a letter to day from
Margaret also one from James in which they
report "pleasant Spring weather" at last - Letters
from home during our exile, are more promotive
of health than dry air and pine trees - and the
great event of the day here, is the distribution of
the Mail - I hope to get a letter from you
while I remain here - at least, I shall look for
one and if you are as faithful in the discharge
of this kind of debt as you have been in times
past, shall not look in vain - I did intend
to write Anne but must defer it to day - give
her my love - also to Father and Mother - and
to any others who may require or rather enquire
with love and gratitude

Your brother John